

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 23, 2010

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20501

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) considers the location for the Veterans Health Administration Archives, we strongly urge you give full consideration to housing the archives at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center campus in Dayton, Ohio.

As you know, Dayton has a long history of service to our nation's veterans and is home to one of the original United States veterans' facilities. The Ohio community has been caring for our nation's veterans since the Civil War era when it housed a branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, a predecessor to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Support for our veterans in the Miami Valley is as strong today as ever. As the home of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, one of our nation's largest and most complex military bases, our community is focused on the needs of our nation's military. The Dayton community holds a deep respect for veterans—this respect is firmly ingrained in local civic institutions and among our community leaders. Our community is proud of the Dayton VA Medical Center and the service that it provides to the men and women who served in our armed forces. Ohio views hosting the VA archives as an extension of that support.

The Dayton region is well suited to supporting federal museums and archives, particularly related to national defense. The National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson is the world's oldest and largest museum of military aviation. With 1.3 million annual visitors, the museum would help generate visitation to the VA archives. The VA archives, if located at the Dayton VA Medical Center, would become the anchor of Dayton's West Third Street "Corridor of Innovation" which includes a Wright Brothers' bicycle shop, the home of African American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, the Wright brothers' airplane factory, and a building that was part of the Manhattan Project that developed the atomic bomb. The VA archives could also work seamlessly with nearby Wright State University, with its nationally recognized Graduate Program in Historical and Archival Administration.

Perhaps the greatest attraction to locating the archives on the Dayton Medical Center campus is the historic buildings themselves. One of the buildings in Dayton under consideration housed the headquarters of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, which opened in 1867, and once had a zoo, library and arboretum. It was in this building that the principal federal support for our nation's veterans was planned and managed. Also under consideration is the Clubhouse which provided space for veterans to relax and where veteran organizations met, such as the Grand Army of the Republic, the Union Veteran League, and the Naval Veterans Association.

There is no location in the nation that offers more to the Veterans Health Administration archives than Dayton, Ohio, for community support, synergy with existing museums and archival programs, and historical context. With its impressive record of service to veterans and its history of innovation in military and non-military subjects, Dayton would provide an exceptional home for the project. Finally, with more than 930,000 veterans in Ohio and our state having the fourth largest number of returning veterans from the current wars, Ohio provides a large and diverse constituency who would undoubtedly contribute to the success of this project. We appreciate your consideration of our views.

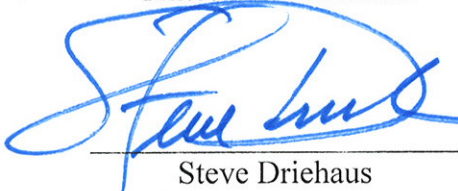
Sincerely,

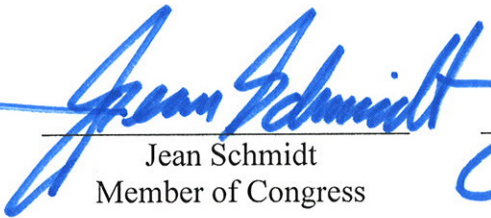
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United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress



Steve Driehaus
Member of Congress



Jean Schmidt
Member of Congress



Jim Jordan
Member of Congress



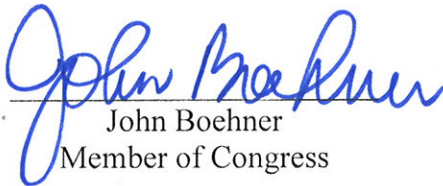
Bob Latta
Member of Congress



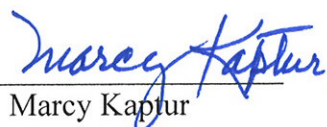
Charlie Wilson
Member of Congress



Steve Austria
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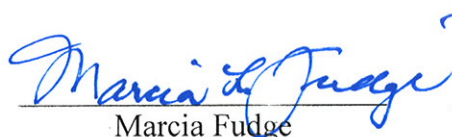
John Boehner
Member of Congress



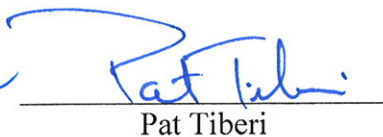
Marcy Kaptur
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Dennis Kucinich
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Marcia Fudge
Member of Congress



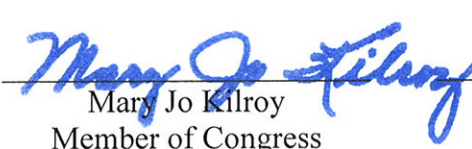
Pat Tiberi
Member of Congress



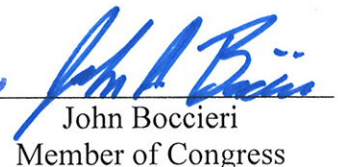
Betty Sutton
Member of Congress




Steve LaTourette
Member of Congress



Mary Jo Kilroy
Member of Congress



John Boccieri
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



Zach Space
Member of Congress

cc: Mr. Guy B. Richardson,
Medical Center Director
(Dayton)

cc: Ms. Darlene Richardson,
"Historian" at Veterans Affairs